1: Kolarz J-4 (no date) 1954 RR1 Siberia RR1

inhabitants of over forty-five European Russian gubernii participated in the colonization after the hardships of a long and complicated journey had been alleviated.[14] Migration to the Far East assumed a real mass character, particularly after the Russo-Japanese War, when numbers reached the record height of 76,637 in 1907. 167

The boom of the migration to the Far East in the last years of the Czarist régime made little difference to the magnitude of the task which the Soviet power had to face. This can be gathered from the fact that in 1926 the total number of inhabitants in the F.E.T. was still below the two million mark, and this included both Asiatics and Europeans. The number of Europeans alone did not exceed 1,600,000, including 1,531,000 representatives of the three main Slavonic peoples of the U.S.S.R. – Great Russians, Ukrainians* and Byelorussians. Thus, the Europeans of the Russian Far East were an insignificant factor compared with the masses of China and Japan living at Russia's doorstep. We shall see now by what means the Soviet Government tried to change the situation and what success it achieved in its endeavours.

COLONIZATION BY CONVICTS

Colonization by convicts is neither a Soviet nor a Russian invention. It has been practised elsewhere, for instance, in Australia, but there it came to an end in 1838. In Russia, more particularly in the Russian Far East, colonization by convicts is not only flourishing at the present time, but it may not even have reached its maximum expansion. Certain remote Soviet Far Eastern territories have absorbed especially high numbers of forced labourers. Consequently, the colonization of the vast area which forms the hinterland of the Okhotsk Sea is almost exclusively due to convicts working under the supervision of the M.V.D. (previously N.K.V.D.). 167 697 625

* According to the 1926 census the Ukrainians in the Far Eastern Territory numbered 315,000 and the Byelorussians 41,000. There are particularly important Ukrainian settlements near the town of Blagoveshchensk, as well as at several points along the railway line running from Khabarovsk to Vladivostok, parallel to the Chinese-Soviet border. The Soviet régime provided Ukrainian language schools for the Ukrainian settlers and founded as many as seventeen Ukrainian 'National Districts' in various parts of the F.E.T.

Ukrainian nationalists refer to the entire Soviet Pacific coastal area as the 'Green Wedge' (Zeleny Klin) as distinct from the 'Grey Wedge', which is the Ukrainian settlers' area in Northern Kirghizistan and Southern Kazakhstan. These nationalists are inclined to consider the Soviet Pacific region a Ukrainian and not a Russian national possession. Indeed, the *Ukrainian Encyclopedia*, published by Ukrainian scholars of Eastern Galicia during the inter-war period, described the 'Green Wedge' as a 'Ukrainian colony on the Pacific Ocean'. The *Encyclopedia* estimated that 30 per cent of the population of the 'Green Wedge' were Ukrainians, against 52 per cent 'Muscovites', i.e., Great Russians. (*Ukrainska Zagalna Entsiklopedia*. Lviv-Stanislaviv-Kolomiya, 1935, vol, ii, pp. 42–3.) The importance of the 'Ukrainian problem' in the Soviet Far East must not, however, be overestimated. The dividing line in the Far East does not run between the various groups of European colonists but between Europeans and Asiatics.

l: Kolarz J-4 (no date) 1954 RRl Siberia RR1

connection with the forced labour system. A sparsely populated territory on the Kolyma River and around the Okhotsk Sea, which, not so long before, had been the home only of Eveni, Yakuts and other natives, had suddenly become an object of mass colonization by convicts, probably by as many as 400,000. The sudden emergence of huge forced labour camps in tribal territories was bound to have a considerable effect both on the way of life and on the moral outlook of the natives. It is only logical that the N.K.V.D.-M.V.D. should have tried to enlist the support of the natives against camp inmates trying to escape. Former political prisoners have even asserted that the N.K.V.D. pays the natives, either in cash or in the form of vodka, for every escaped person whom they capture.[8] This makes it understandable that the prisoners extend their contempt of the N.K.V.D. to the natives. They charge the authorities with 'coddling and pampering' them in the very areas in which many members of Russia's intelligentsia are gradually being exterminated.[9] It must be said in fairness that the N.K.V.D. is not the first Russian authority to discover that use can be made of Far Eastern natives against convicts from European Russia. The priority for this idea goes to the Czarist governor of Sakhalin Island, General Konotovich. Chekhov, mentioned in his book on Sakhalin that the General had ordered Gilyaks (Nivkhi) to be employed as guards for Russian criminals.

THE REINDEER PROBLEM

Lack of understanding of the 'natives' is manifested not only by the activities of the big State trusts, but also in the day-to-day work of Soviet officials in charge of 'native affairs'. Communist Party officials think in terms of ready-made patterns, and cut-and-dried formulae. They are usually convinced that what is good for Moscow and Vladivostok must be equally good for the most remote parts of the Union. This frame of mind makes it difficult for them to find the right approach to the special conditions of the Far North. Much could be said, for instance, about the peculiar way in which Soviet authorities have handled the basis of Far Northern economy, reindeer-breeding. As late as 1950, the Communist Party of a Siberian province sent large piles of pamphlets on sheep-farming and bee-keeping to the nomads living near the Arctic coast, where there are neither sheep nor bees – only reindeer.[10] This actually happened in North-western Siberia, but it could easily have happened in the Far East. The *Pravda* correspondent in Khabarovsk stated in 1947 that there was not a single specialist in problems of reindeer-breeding in the State and Party offices of that city, although the Khabarovsk Territory includes the largest reindeer population of any administrative unit in the Soviet Union.[11]